

From: Willy Vogler [mailto:wwogler@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 06, 2008 10:04 PM
To: MLPAComments
Subject: Clam Island

To those concerned,

Please do not include the Clam Island Marine Recreational Management Area as it is now proposed in any options sent on to the Fish and Game Commission. It is flawed and would not serve the public's good nor the clams or seals it claims to aid.

In the 1990's the Dept. of Fish and Game surveyed the gaper clam population on Clam Island and Seal Island. Even though the numbers of clammers was high and many lifelong clammers reported that gaper numbers had recently declined, Tom Moore of DFG determined that the numbers of gapers were acceptable and no change of regulations was necessary. Lawson's Landing, operator of the ferry service to the islands, ceased the ferry operation in 1999 due to anecdotal reports of overharvesting. Since then reports of increased numbers of gaper clams due to a decreased number of clammers would indicate no further protection is needed.

Harbor Seals already enjoy full protection under the Marine Mammal Act. No fisherman or hunter currently harvests them legally as a "no take" law already exists. Passing boats may bother the seals, but "no take" is not "no pass." Boats will continue to pass by in the navigable waters. A boater education program would be far more effective.

Tomales Bay is more than just a nursery for aquatic life. It is also a sheltered body of water that lets new boaters and fishermen interact with the ocean environment for the first time. The vast majority of new boaters do not have access to a GPS device that would allow them to avoid the closed area as defined in the proposed regulations. If the intent of the proposal is to drive new fishermen away from the ocean by ticketing people who unknowingly bumble into the protected zone while crabbing, clamming or fishing then good work. Otherwise, try again.

The MLPA is important. Offshore closures are already having a positive effect on rockfish numbers and some shallow closed areas will be important to aiding in their recovery. However, the proposed Clam Island area is not necessary and would hurt sportsmen more than it would help the environment.

Carl W. Vogler Jr.